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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000404

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [EWWT](#) [ECON](#) [ASEC](#) [MARR](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: DRC PORT SECURITY IMPROVES, BUT STILL NOT ISPS  
COMPLIANT

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Classified By: CCorkey for Reasons 1.4 b/d/e.

[¶1.](#) (C) Summary. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) found some improvements in security at the Congolese ports of Matadi and Banana, but the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is still not in full compliance with the International Ship and Port Security (ISPS) code. The Congolese National Transport Agency (ONATRA) officials who manage DRC ports have followed several USCG recommendations to come into compliance, but are facing the challenges of over-crowded ports, a lack of infrastructure, and a lack of support from the Ministry of Transportation. End Summary.

#### Background

[¶2.](#) (U) A Port Security Advisory (PSA) for the DRC was issued in May 2005, and restrictions have since been placed on vessels that enter DRC ports and plan to subsequently visit U.S. ports. The USCG removed the PSA after a September 2005 visit, but placed the DRC on probation pending completion of several recommendations for it to come into ISPS code compliance. The probationary status, still in effect, affects the ports of Matadi and Boma on the Congo River, and the Atlantic Ocean port of Banana, located at the mouth of the Congo River.

[¶3.](#) (SBU) The port of Matadi is the furthest upriver, and functions as the major import and export point for Kinshasa and western DRC. Matadi is primarily used by feeder ships that bring in containers from the transshipment port of Pointe Noire in the Republic of Congo because of the shallow draft of the Congo River. MIDEMA, owned by U.S.-based Seaboard Corporation, has been adversely affected by the PSA because it occasionally imports wheat from the U.S. for its Matadi flour mill.

#### USCG Finds Some Improvements

[¶4.](#) (C) A USCG officer met with GDRC officials in the Ministry of Transportation and visited the ports of Matadi and Banana April 7 through April 11. The visit was the first since February 2007 (reftel), when the USCG determined the DRC was still out of compliance with the ISPS code. The port of Matadi remains short of the ISPS code, but ONATRA has implemented several of the USCG recommendations in Matadi and the port of Banana has followed all recommendations made during the last visit.

[¶5.](#) (C) The USCG did not see anyone without proper identification badges in the port areas, and security

screening has improved. The USCG also saw a registration process in place for mariners that entered port areas from the ships. The perimeter walls in Banana have been completed, and most of the perimeter in Matadi was well sealed. There was, however, a ladder to the roof of a guard shack against the perimeter wall in Matadi. (Note: Goods are sometimes stolen and thrown over the wall to accomplices on the other side. End note.)

¶16. (C) The port of Banana now has its security plan in place, approved on July 30, 2007. The new Port Facility Security Officer (PFSO) in Banana, Gedeon Shembo, has finished repairing a hole in the wall and installed a new gate, fully enclosing all zones of the port. The USCG thanked the PFSO for following all of the previous recommendations, and only suggested putting up a "Restricted Access" sign to mark the highest security zone of the port.

¶17. (C) ONATRA has implemented periodic security "drills" as directed by the ISPS code, such as verifying whether the guards check all ID badges. Unfortunately, neither Matadi nor Banana has documented these drills, a key requirement of ISPS. The ONATRA officials said they will also follow the recommendation to plan broader security "exercises" with other GDRC and city departments (e.g. a bomb threat drill that would include local police and fire departments).

So Close, But Matadi Needs Some Work  
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¶18. (C) In addition to documenting drills and starting

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exercises, the USCG saw several problems that still exist in the port of Matadi. There was someone bathing in the river at the port during the visit, a practice the USCG said ONATRA should prevent. The walls between the port area and the railway line are under construction, but are not yet complete. Finally, there were an estimated 2,000 people in the port area during the visit, far too many for ONATRA to police effectively.

¶19. (C) The larger problem affecting the port of Matadi is over-crowding due to a backlog of containers (septel). The USCG saw port workers "unstuffing" containers in the port, and containers were stacked within a few meters of docked ships. The USCG met with the Director of ONATRA, Department of Maritime Ports, Umba di Malanda, who shared a March 30, 2008 memo banning the practice of unstuffing containers except on Mondays and Fridays. (Note: The visit was on Tuesday, April 8, and there were at least two containers being unstuffed. End note.) The director said they will completely ban unstuffing in a few months.

¶110. (C) The PFSO for Matadi, Medard Nsimba, agreed that ONATRA needs to create a buffer zone between the ships and the containers, but said the backlog is making a near-term solution nearly impossible. Nsimba pointed to the lack of rail and road infrastructure as key obstacles to getting the containers processed and transported to Kinshasa. Nsimba also said ONATRA is getting no instruction or guidance from the Ministry of Transportation to improve the security or efficiency of the ports.

Ministry of Transportation Not Helping  
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¶111. (C) The USCG met briefly with the Minister of Transportation Chief of Staff, Massonsa-wa-Massonsa, and shared the findings from the port visits. The ministry liaison with ONATRA in Kinshasa said they will work to improve communication with the ministry, and said he hopes the USCG visit will help advance their issues within the Ministry.

¶112. (C) Comment. The Director of Maritime Ports, Umba di

Malanda, was previously the port authority in Boma, and has been promoted to manage all three ports. The director and the PFSOs are competent and willing to make all necessary changes. The lack of transportation infrastructure and the container backlog are severely undermining their efforts to come into ISPS compliance, but they have still made significant improvements since the February 2007 visit. The final measures needed in Matadi, aside from reducing the number of containers in port, will depend on adequate attention and funding from the Ministry of Transportation.

End Comment.

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